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Tunnel vision
Frank Clarke, 1, enjoys a play tunnel during the Haliburton and District Lions Club's annual Stories in the Park Fun Fair on Aug. 27 at Head Lake Park. /ADAM FRISK staff

Council suggests pet owners should keep cats inside; floats by-law

ADAM FRISK
Journalist

The Municipality of Dysart et al is suggesting cat owners should keep their felines inside, restricting them from roaming the great outdoors in an effort to deal with an apparent feral cat problem, and to simply be a good neighbour.

The municipality launched a community education program aiming to share the benefits of keeping your feline companion inside your home. The initiative comes after a councillor suggested there's a feral cat problem in the municipality.

"I'm getting some complaints about feral cats in the community and the havoc they are causing," Councillor Pat Casey said during the Aug. 26 regular council meeting. "And I know we have a canine by-law under dog control and I would suggest it's becoming more of an issue, fast."

Casey did not provide examples of community complaints regarding the feral cats during the council meeting but suggested that it's an increasing problem.

"I think a public education program of making sure that they look after your individual pet is something we could lead

see EDUCATION page 12

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NAPOLEON

County councillors debate the future of meeting space

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

It's been a fairly contentious topic for the past few weeks, as county councillors have navigated the ins and outs of potentially moving their location.

During a past meeting, council directed county staff to attain a real estate appraisal for 12 Newcastle Street, the current Land Registry Office, as well as a cost estimate for the construction of an addition to 11 Newcastle Street, which currently houses the county council chambers and staff offices.

At the time, there was interest in changing locations from 11 Newcastle to 12 Newcastle, but the recommendation to proceed was met with rebuttals from councillors, who sought further information on the potential move.

On July 17, staff requested a summary report from Tessier Design Corp. regarding constructing a building addition to the rear of the existing building. The report noted that a 2,600 foot, two story addition is feasible. "That space, it's important to realize, isn't for a lot of growth. It actually accommodates our current needs," said County CAO Gary Dyke when he spoke to council on Aug. 27. "We currently have two staff members who don't actually have a space to work directly in the building … but also we have two staff members who are situated in less than optimum locations with respect from a health and safety standpoint."

While the addition would not necessarily increase space, it would allow for the building to level up to AODA accessibility requirements, such as the council chambers being moved to the first floor, and appropriate stairs, ramps, and hand rails.

"It should be noted that leaving the council chamber on the top floor fails to address the lack of an accessible path to the offices on the second floor," outlined the staff report to council, "as the public is required to pass through the council chamber, even if a meeting is in progress, to access the other side of the building and the washrooms."

> ***"We truly believe that the option brought forward is the most fiscally responsible one we have ..."***
>
> — Gary Dyke, Haliburton County CAO

Dyke noted that attaining a geotechnical study on the property would have cost the county $12,000 to complete. "So we didn't actually commission the full study, but we got a desktop opinion from an engineer as to what could be required (for the addition)."

If staff were to proceed with just the addition on-site, they would be looking at a price tag of approximately $2.5 million, not including any specialized foundation work if required, or any ongoing accessibility requirements that currently need to be implemented in the existing building, plus the geotechnical study. Dyke shared in his report that if all that were combined, they would be looking at $3.1 million dollars to make the current building fit the needs of staff and community.

If staff and council were to move across the street to 12 Newcastle, the total cost would be $2.4 million.

Staff requested a real estate appraisal from the Troy Austen Real Estate Team for 12 Newcastle Street, which was identified to have a market value range of $375,000 to $425,000.

The report was concluded by providing the recommendation to council to move ahead with renovations to the current building, and relocating the council chambers to 12 Newcastle Street, based on cost efficiencies.

"I know that we have gone through a lot of different considerations and looked at our different options," said Councillor Liz Danielsen, Mayor of Algonquin Highlands. "And I am still absolutely set on the staff recommendation that we proceed with what was proposed to us early on in the year with the council chambers moving to 12 Newcastle Street and the improvements made to this building."

Danielsen noted that she would welcome Minden council to meet in the new council chambers when ready.

"We are not dwindling as a community," said Councillor Lisa Schell, the Deputy Mayor of Minden Hills. "We are continuing to grow. At some point, it might not be in the lifetime of any of these members of council, but I am sure there will be an amalgamation of some sort with the county."

"I do have a problem with across the street," said Councillor Bob Carter, the Mayor of Minden Hills. "We welcome your generous offer for Minden council to move in the new building, but, we have a building, and there is little we can do with that building since we also share it with the court, so that building is going to continue to exist."

Carter brought up ongoing expenses to the proposed building, and concerns around costs moving forward. "I would much prefer if we could sell it or re-purpose it to some other non-government organization … it may not be ideal for child-care spaces, but there may be something that could be done somehow."

Carter agreed that the work needs to be done at the current building, "but someone still needs to convince me about across the street," he said.

"We're on a slippery slope here," echoed Councillor Murray Fearrey, the Mayor of Dyart et al. "We've got people who can't even afford groceries here … how much do you keep adding five and six per cent every year to the tax base, is it really necessary that we do what we have to do?"

Dyke responded to Fearrey by saying that he understands and supports his comments around a concern for increase for rate-payers. "However, the option that has been brought forward by staff to council has been done with that in mind."

Between the two options of addition versus the purchase of the new building, Dyke noted that cost efficiencies lie in the opportunity to mitigate any external construction. All alterations would be internal renovations.

"We've done the best we can, and we truly believe that the option brought forward is the most fiscally responsible one we have," said Dyke.

Councillor Jennifer Dailloux challenged Dyke's point, seeking clarification around the option to share a council space with the existing Minden chambers. Dyke indicated that at the June council meeting, he believed that council did not want to pursue that option. He agreed that the cost for that option would be less, but some accommodations would need to be made, and he did not believe that option to be sustainable down the road.

"I just don't know if we've pursued every possible option," said Fearrey, noting that some "outside the box" options may arise with staff potentially working off-site.

"What else are we getting across the street for $1.3 million dollars?" asked Carter. "Because if it's only a council chamber, I think that's a colossal waste of money."

Dyke clarified that there are additional meetings and committees that utilize the council chambers, so it would not merely be for council meetings. He also noted that by expanding across the street, there would also be the option for a public space within the building - a feature the current building does not house.

After a tense discussion amongst councillors, the recommendation was approved in a vote of 5-3, allowing staff to move forward with the recommendation of renovations to both 11 and 12 Newcastle Street in Minden.

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Winding down a summer of musical memories

Award-nominated Canadian musician Gordie Tentrees performs during the final Music in the Park at Head Lake on Aug. 26. /ADAM FRISK staff

Paudash Lake residents give back to fire hall

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

On Sunday, Aug. 31, residents of the Paudash Lake area came together for a yoga event in support of their local fire hall. Lesley Ferrier and Melissa Hyde, both residents of the lake, originally organized the event as a stand up paddleboard yoga fundraiser. With the risk of rain for Sunday, the event pivoted to a yoga at Highlands East Fire Station Number Six.

The purpose of the event was to raise money to donate to the fire hall for them to purchase needed equipment.

Hyde is a highly experienced yoga instructor who donated her time for the cause.

"Our community is highly supportive of the volunteer firefighters working out of our local fire hall," said Ferrier.

In the past, their community banded together to purchase ice water rescuing equipment.

Through Facebook, members of the Paudash Lake community challenged each other to donate towards the cause. Community members sounded off their roads in Facebook comments, signifying their team while tagging others to contribute.

Like a race announcer, Ferrier regularly posted positions of the roads with the highest amount of donations.

"Every day I wake up and look out at this lake and feel gratitude," said Ferrier. "Not only because of the beauty of nature around us, but because we have an amazing community that pulls together and supports each other."

The Loomex Group presented a fire master plan to Highlands East council on Aug. 12, with 33 recommendations. One recommendation is to close Fire Station Six and Paudash, and move all of the equipment and staff to Station One in Cardiff. Terry Gervais, a representative of Loomex told council that it would save them $6 million dollars, including the selling off of equipment and their former location.

"There are many people who are concerned about the possibility of two of our fire stations closing, leaving parts of the community vulnerable," said Ferrier. "Word is just spreading as many of us were not aware this proposal was back on the table."

Ferrier says that she has already spoken with her insurance broker, who estimated an increase of several thousands of dollars to her bill.

"Many of us will be outside of the kilometre limit which bumps us into the "unserviceable" category," said Ferrier. "Others are making the same inquiries and receiving the same message - that there will be a significant increase in their insurance."

Allison Scanlan, another full-time resident of HE says that she is a strong supporter of her community banding together to help this local initiative.

"My husband and I love to spend quality time with our family, especially our grandchildren, in a safe and welcoming environment," said Scanlan. "The town's clean air, natural beauty, and community spirit make family gatherings and our enjoyment of its vast natural spaces truly memorable. Highlands East provides a peaceful setting for recreation, relaxation, and building lasting childhood memories, fostering a strong connection with nature for all ages."

At the heart of it all, when we support our communities, they strengthen the very foundations that support both the people and the businesses living within them," said Scanlan.

Ferrier says that she hopes an impact study will be completed before any decisions are made regarding the future of the fire stations.

Despite the uncertainties with the fire hall closures, the residents of Paudash Lake are devoted to assisting their volunteer firefighters.

Ferrier and other concerned residents are determined to have their voices heard before any decisions are made.

New ambulances come to town

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

Talk of tariffs has impacted a lot more than spiked prices at grocery stores.

Impacts to the supply chain for parts and vehicles are playing a role in the availability of ambulances at a local level.

Michael Slatter, the director of Haliburton County Paramedic Services went to County Council on Aug. 27 to provide an update on time lines around the receipt of new vehicles to add to the fleet. Two were ordered in 2024, and according to Slatter, the delivery dates were anticipated for the end of August. Slatter noted that he has heard from the manufacturers, who confirmed that the new units will be coming off the line in early September, with a delivery date in mid-September. "These are replacement vehicles for a couple of our older ones, plus the addition of the power load system that was started previously."

With the current manufacturers, staff are looking at an 18 to 24 month wait-time for new vehicles, from time of order to arrival. "This puts a couple of our other vehicles in need of more immediate attention to be replaced," said Slatter.

The replacement schedule for ambulances that has been utilized in Haliburton County is every 60 to 72 months, or 300,000 kilometres. The asset management plan and capital plan include the purchase of one replacement ambulance per year.

According to a report provided by Slatter to council, a number of their current vehicles are well over the threshold of warranting replacement. "This extensive delay that we are experiencing along with increased call volumes are seeing the kilometres driven on ambulances far exceeding 300,000 kilometres," he said. "We currently have three ambulances that are over 320,000 kilometres for which we are experiencing increased maintenance costs due to repairs."

In the report to council, staff recommended $275,718.78 be drawn from the Ambulance Capital Reserve to cover the costs of purchasing the ambulance set to be delivered in 2025. Council approved the request, with no further questions raised.

Final price tag on ice storm hits council table

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

"It seems like forever ago now," said Haliburton County CAO Gary Dyke, when referencing the April ice storm that slammed the county earlier this year. Dyke brought a report to the county on Aug. 27 during their regular meeting of council, outlining the final numbers around the storm that impacted thousands locally.

"It ended up being the third largest ice storm event in Ontario history," said Dyke. "It was quite significant in the sense that we had greater than 20,000 residents without power for anywhere between three and 14 days." Based on information provided by Hydro One, approximately 300 hydro poles were destroyed and needed replacement because of the storm.

He also reminded council of the number of days the community was without internet or cellular coverage, "which was significant for us," he said.

Dyke outlined the country costs associated with the storm, which were separated from individual township's handling of the situation, was $343,892.60. This covered wages, materials, and contracted services, both in the immediacy of the emergency, but also dipping into the clean-up portion in the aftermath of the storm.

Once the dust settled, the county initiated a debris clean-up program for properties within the storm damaged area. Through the program, county staff picked up storm debris from residential properties between May 13 and June 13.

The province had set up a funding opportunity called the Municipal Ice Storm Assistance (MISA) program, which was developed in light of the storm, where the county was eligible for a certain percentage of recovery for the unbudgeted costs. The county qualifies for up to 75 per cent of coverage from the program.

Dyke noted that originally, the costs required to be eligible were significantly higher than what the county spent on recovery, and in the early days of the storm, if a municipality did not hit that high-point threshold, it would not qualify for any form of recovery.

"I think it's important now that we should recognize Premier Ford in his insistence that they waive that criteria," he said, noting that the county falls within a smaller bracket of recovery financial services, and is therefore eligible for 75 per cent coverage of items directly related to the storm.

Hydro One also provided the county with a $10,000 grant to off-set some costs around the storm, but between that grant along with the coverage from the province, the county still has a bill of approximately $143,000 that was unbudgeted.

In order to receive the 75 per cent coverage from the province, Dyke was seeking approval from council to move forward with the application of interest. County council gave the green light to move ahead for recovery funding.

New initiative to spark positive community change

A group of community members are working together to create a home-grown initiative to strengthen local democracy and promote more civic engagement. Through a series of events the Haliburton Highlands Healthy Democracy Project (HHHDP) will encourage and prepare people to get involved in their community and make a positive difference, inside and outside of local politics.

"Community organizations and municipal governments benefit when more people, especially younger folks and those who haven't traditionally been involved, become active participants around committee and council tables," explained Lauren Hunter, a member of the HHHDP steering committee. "We know that local democracies are under strain, that fewer people are voting and running for office, and that it's harder to build connections and community. This project is one way we can try to change that here at home in the Highlands."

The HHHDP will launch this fall with the first two information sessions of a four-part series called "Voices and Votes"

- Partnership in Action: Community + Council will feature Jessica Slade from Civics with Slade, sharing information about how government works and how individuals can contribute to community development by working with local governments to make positive change; and highlighting local success stories. It will take place on Tuesday, Sept. 16 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Haliburton Legion in Dysart.
- Finding Your Why: The Big Picture will feature former Members of Parliament, Barry Devolin (Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock) and Maryam Monsef (Peterborough Kawartha) speaking to why people should get involved by running for office, supporting a political campaign, or being an informed community member. It will take place on Tuesday, Oct. 7 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Lloyd Watson Community Centre in Wilberforce.

The final two sessions will be held in the spring of 2026, focused on what it's like to run for office and be a municipal representative and what a successful campaign looks like for a candidate, supporter, or voter. All of the sessions will be free, non-partisan, and open to all. Community members can choose to attend one or more of the sessions, and the steering committee is working to ensure the sessions are recorded for those who can't attend in person.

"When we lower the barriers to participation - when we give people the tools, the knowledge, and the encouragement - they don't just get involved, they lead. And that helps build a stronger, more resilient Haliburton Highlands," said Jessica Slade, a member of the HHHDP steering committee. "With municipal elections coming up in the Fall of 2026, we want to give as many people as possible the opportunity to get involved."

The HHHDP is a project of the Haliburton County Community Cooperative, and is grateful to be financially supported by HCDC (Local Initiatives Program) and the Telling Our Stories Speaker Series. More information and registration for the first two sessions is available at www.hhhdp.ca.

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02: Finding Your Why: The Big Picture
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Discover why being informed and engaged—as a candidate, supporter, or voter—is essential to how democracy works and how change is made.

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Haliburton Highlands
Healthy Democracy Project

We are a project of the Haliburton County Community Cooperative, supported by the Telling Our Stories Speaker Series and the Haliburton County Development Corporation.

LEARN MORE AT HHHDP.CA

Sunshine and stories

Kids and parents take in the Haliburton and District Lions Club's annual Stories in the Park Fun Fair on Aug. 27 at Head Lake Park. /ADAM FRISK staff

Below: Children play some mini-golf during the annual reading festival, which is dedicated to supporting a love of literacy for all ages and stages.

Kids enjoy some story time.

Young artist Rowan Boisvert, 3, gets creative with some paint.

Children catch some fish during the annual Stories in the Park Fun Fair.

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CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER AWARD 2018

Published by **White Pine Media Corp**

JENNIFER MCEATHRON, General Manager and Sales
jenniferm@haliburtonpress.com

EMILY STONEHOUSE, Managing Editor
emily@haliburtonpress.com

THOMAS SMITH, Journalist
thomas@haliburtonpress.com

ADAM FRISK, Journalist
adam@haliburtonpress.com

KAREN LONDON, Production Co-ordinator
karen@haliburtonpress.com

REED SACHAROFF, Production

STACEY POTALIVO, Production

LAURA SMITH, Sales
laura@haliburtonpress.com

PAUL BANELOPOULOS, Sales
paul@haliburtonpress.com

CIRCULATION
subscriptions@haliburtonpress.com

INSIDE SALES
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Print Subscriptions 1 yr/ $51 (taxes included). Published weekly by White Pine Media
To Subscribe to the Print or Digital edition, email subscriptions@haliburtonpress.com or call 705-457-1037.

Do it for the staff

THE DYNAMIC between staff and council has long been a relationship I find interesting.

At a lengthy county council meeting last week, for nearly an hour, councillors stayed at odds over the recommendation for an expansion to their current council chambers; a suggestion based on staff feedback.

In simplified terms, two options were presented based on the current need for additional space: either add an addition to the existing building, or expand across the street through the acquisition of an additional site.

For nearly an hour, both options were debated. In what is often expected and anticipated, county councillors Fearrey and McKechnie from Dysart were on the same page with a Dysart-centric lens, skirting around the options and opting to stick to the status-quo of no changes whatsoever from a cost-efficiencies perspective.

Editorial

Emily Stonehouse

County CAO Gary Dyke respectfully held his ground, calmly clarifying a number of times there is not an option available to do absolutely nothing. There were two options presented, and one route needed to be taken. From a safety perspective. From an accessibility perspective. From a growth perspective. Change needed to happen.

Other county councillors were more receptive to the recommendations, noting the needs for expansion are not only required for staff, but for the community as a whole. Having a public meeting space is something county council has lacked for years.

We could dive into the great debate of reasoning behind having four individual municipal offices and council chambers, as well as a separate location and meeting room for the same councillors who are the heads of the lower-tiered organizations, but many readers know my thoughts on moving forward with amalgamation. Nothing but a distant and convoluted dream at this point.

But what I believe was absent during the debate at county council was a true representation of staff needs. CAO Gary Dyke did an admirable job of sticking to his points and presenting the suggestions based on staff requests, even when councillors challenged him.

But the recommendation made to council was primarily based on costs. And of course, I recognize where this comes from. A lower price tag is automatically the favoured approach. At least in most cases.

But I found it interesting that council spent a huge chunk of time deciding whether it was a good fit for them to have a new council chamber, and very little time considering the needs of county staff: the people who are the lifeblood of any municipality.

I used to live near those offices, and every day, before the sun came up, the first lights in the building trickled on. They stayed on until well after it was dark, each and every night. Weekends and holidays included, even if others didn't see them.

Events, roads, trails, festivals, accessibility initiatives, budgeting; the many intricate factors that make all our communities tick, happen within those walls.

And not by councillors. By people whose faces are rarely seen in meetings, names rarely mentioned in newspapers.

But employee happiness comes with a price tag. And if the staff are making a recommendation that their day-to-day can potentially be improved in some small way, it should be up to councillors to see beyond that price tag, and stay open-minded around what it means for the ones who make our communities tick.

Keeping young people safe online

BEING A parent or caregiver in the age of the internet is immensely challenging. Parents today must have a foot in each of two worlds – the in-person world and the online world – when thinking about the safety and wellbeing of their kids. The online world can be a particularly scary place, especially when it comes to how easy it can be for strangers to interact with children online.

Recently, the video game platform Roblox has been in the news for some very frightening incidents involving children. Roblox is an online gaming platform where users can create online games as well as play them. Of the 89 million daily active users on Roblox, 40 per cent are under the age of 12. For years, Roblox has been criticized for its lack of protection measures for children, with stories of kids being able to access adult-only content, being contacted by adult strangers posing as children, and being victims of harassment and sexual exploitation by adults on the platform. All while Roblox has marketed itself as a family-friendly service where kids can exercise their creativity and play games.

Humans & Technology

Erin Kernohan-Berning

Roblox has been criticized for pursuing profit over the safety of their most vulnerable users – the most tragic endpoint of the kind of enshittification we've seen across all sorts of online platforms. Even gamer parents, the ones that grew up during the moral panic around gaming in the late 90s and early 2000s, have talked about prohibiting their own kids from using the platform because of ongoing negligence and the too-little-too-late introduction of child safety features and parental controls.

For the caregivers of the roughly 39 million children using the platform, this kind of news is no doubt terrifying. Even if, as the company claims, the majority of children have a safe and enriching experience using Roblox, the possibility that a child could be harmed by someone online can be enough to want to just pull the plug on any kind of online activity for their kids whatsoever. However, while keeping kids completely offline is a choice, it doesn't necessarily work for all families and isn't necessarily the choice that will prepare kids for adulthood in an online world. Thankfully, there are some really good resources out there that can help guide parents through keeping their kids safe online.

The first challenge caregivers have is just keeping up. Previewing online platforms before letting your kids use them is one way to do this but can also be a daunting time commitment and learning curve. Common Sense Media (CommonSense.org) is an excellent resource for parents to find expert reviews and recommended ages for movies, television shows, social media platforms, books, and games. Their information also includes suggestions for age-appropriate conversations to have with your children, a breakdown of major concerns with the platform, and a summary of what parents need to know. Common Sense Media is a subscription-based service, but does allow three free reviews per month, and has a YouTube channel where some reviews may be found for free.

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection (ProtectChildren.ca) has a number of resources for parents including information on age-specific risks of online activities, what parents can do about these risks, and educational resources for kids and youth. The site also links to crisis resources that are available for kids and youth who have been harmed online including NeedHelpNow.ca and Cybertip.ca. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection is a nonprofit organization whose partners include the Government of Canada, major Canadian internet service providers, as well as international child protection groups.

A recent article from Penn State University suggests that parents playing online games with their children, as well as siblings and friends playing online games together, can help form a sort of safety net. This reinforces the idea that online safety can be bolstered by offline community. A network of safe adults, family and peers can help identify when online hazards like scamming, exploitation, and abuse are occurring, and can intervene and support kids if they encounter these online dangers. This removes the isolation factor that predators rely on.

Children's online safety should not be the sole responsibility of parents. However, because companies like Roblox (which made over $1 billion in revenue last quarter) have prioritized profit and neglected the safety of their users, it ultimately falls to parents to fill that gap. Thankfully, parents are not alone and there are resources to help them and their kids navigate a hazardous online world. But as a society, whether we have our own kids or not, we need to demand that tech companies take on their fair share of the responsibility for keeping people safe online, especially kids.

points of view

Cry hammock

Loon Tales

Steve Galea

IT IS my strong belief that the hammock was originally designed and meant to be used as a weapon of war. It's purpose, I suspect, was to launch your soldiers over deep uncrossable ravines or high fortress walls. I was thinking this the other day as I was being involuntarily jettisoned across the campsite that Jenn and I were staying at. This happened immediately after I decided to lay in my hammock for a "nice, relaxing nap."

Instead, for a fleeting moment, I thought I was about to do a reasonably good half-gainer into the lake, which was problematic since I still had my cell phone and wallet in pockets. It turned out that I was stopped by an immovable hemlock.

Sometimes you just get lucky.

This occurred because, Jenn and I decided to take our camping to a whole other level. One that possesses an additional element of danger, uncertainty and adrenalin.

That's right, we now camp in hammock tents.

I know what you are thinking. What's the big deal? A hammock is a benign entity, meant to enhance relaxation. And that is true.

But you have to get into the hammock first.

I have named my hammock Old Diablo, an apt name for an inanimate object that has the temperament of a grizzly bear with a sore tooth.

Typically, our encounters go something like this:

"I think I'm going to take a nap now," I whisper to Jenn as I look at Old Diablo, though not directly at it. (You never want to look directly at them, as they take this as a challenge to their dominance.)

"Do you think that's a good idea?" Jenn says. "You hit that poor hemlock pretty hard last time you tried. I'm not sure it can take another collision like that."

I shudder at the thought.

"Why not just nap on that rock beneath it? It looks comfortable," Jenn suggests.

I know she's right, but I am still holding a grudge.

So, I bravely saunter within reach of Old Diablo and act as if I'm not going to attempt to tame it.

Sensing this, it rustles nervously in the wind.

Next, I place my hand out, gently pat it, and quietly whisper "Whoa boy! Whoa…"

A palpable tension fills the air – and it doesn't help that Jenn is recording it all on her phone.

"This ought to go viral," she mumbles.

My next move is to slip under the overhead tarp and unzip the bug net that envelops the hammock.

It shudders nervously.

Then in one quick move, I leap inside the bug net and sit crossways on Old Diablo.

What happened next is a bit hazy, but Jenn says I stayed atop it for a full seven seconds – which is a record – before it bucked me off it. Luckily, the tarp and bug net threw me back on, so I got a second chance, which only made Old Diablo even more angry.

This time instead of bucking me as I lay in it, it apparently, spun around 12 to 15 times and tightly trapped me within, wrapped like a mummy. Then, according to Jenn, it unwound at about 2000 rpm and spit me out on the ground below.

Jenn looked at me. I looked at her.

Then I said, "You know, I think I'll just nap on this rock. It looks comfortable…"

pic *of the* **past**

This is the Lorne Bailey Mill on Head Lake. You can see the hardwood logs that got milled and shipped out by train. It burned down in 1969. /Photo submitted by Lisa Robertson

Avoiding the inevitable

Our road Down

Sharon Lynch

MARK WAS pretending he couldn't hear. His mother was calling him from the cottage door but he refused to answer. Knowing what she wanted, he had decided not to cooperate. Not responding to her call was his solution to the current problem. That problem was the prospect of returning to the city and school. Mum wanted him to gather his stuff together, pack everything in the big brown suitcase and what wouldn't fit there, to fill up a couple of cardboard boxes.

But Mark was having none of it. His plan was to convince his parents that he was old enough to stay at the cottage on his own for the coming academic year. While he preferred country living to being in their subdivision, the main reason for his desire to stay put was school.

Entering Grade 9 was not what he wanted to do. His best friend Jake was just the opposite. Jake didn't really understand Mark's dislike of school. Jake was a 'brainer' and got along with everybody, especially girls. The latter was something Mark found mystifying. For Mark, school had always been difficult. It took him longer to learn new things, especially anything involving numbers. Then add to that the whole high school change and he just knew it would be like middle school only worse.

So he had been thinking a lot about the situation for the last week. He had even figured out answers to the objections he knew his parents would have about him staying at the cottage. He had a plan for tackling food, water, heat and what to do if there was an emergency.

A lot of that depended on help from the friendly neighbour down the road but that was fine. The guy was reliable and local so he knew his way around. He and Mark had become friendly over the summer, with Mark helping out a few times with fence repairs and piling wood.

So for now Mark was content to walk through the spent raspberry bushes behind the cottage and get as far away from his mother's calls as possible. He felt kind of bad not answering her though. She was a pretty good mother most of the time. As a former teacher, she had always been a big help with his homework. And he had to admit she was a great cook and he'd miss that staying on his own. But it would be better than high school.

He kept thinking as he walked. His Mum's cooking was something he hadn't really considered up until now. Spaghetti and meat balls; scalloped potatoes; rice pudding and her famous chocolate cake. Suddenly the thought of substituting wieners and beans for all that tasty stuff made him hesitate.

Maybe he was being unreasonable. Maybe high school wouldn't be so bad, just like Jake claimed. Maybe it was worth a try. Maybe he should turn around. After all, a guy needed to eat well, no matter what.

letters to the editor

To the Editor,

Wendy Vanderwal (nee Gorrie) from Newmarket, Ont., asked me to pass the enclosed poem on to the *Echo*. She felt it might be nice to share it with the *Echo's* readers. These few simple lines were written by Wendy's great-great-aunt, Miss May Gorrie of Toronto, in the late 19th Century-early 20th Century. She had beautiful handwriting. Miss Gorrie was a sister of Daniel Gorrie, a prominent Haliburton merchant in those days.

Daniel Gorrie had settled in Haliburton Village by the early 1880s. He sold general merchandise from his store on the site of present-day Shopper's Drug Mart. By the early 1900s, he had moved two doors East to the site of the present-day I.G.A. grocery store (Foodland). None of these buildings still stand, regrettably.

It sometimes seems that whenever somebody makes their home in Haliburton County, it is not long until family and friends pay them a visit and fall in love with the area themselves. Their feelings intensify in proportion to their own circumstances preventing them from being able to live here permanently themselves. Miss Gorrie was one of these people and she wrote this poem to express her feelings.

Daniel Gorrie and his wife Margaret were an important part of the community & members of St. George›s Anglican Church (the English Church) until relocating to Toronto in their elder years around 1913-1914. Daniel had served as Reeve of Dysart et al for the 1913 term. They are buried in Toronto, far from their longtime Haliburton home.

Daniel's stores are pictured on pg. 68 and pg. 70 of the Museum's book *Haliburton - A History in Pictures*. Unfortunately, we have been unable to find a photo of Daniel or sister May. Nevertheless, feel free to publish the poem if you can make use of it.

Sincerely,
Stephen Hill

Poem:

I love the Haliburton Hills
That rise so green and fair
Above the placid lakes below
The lakes lie everywhere
Among the Haliburton Hills
No sound will reach your ear
Except the distant waterfall
As the Loon's lone cry so clear
So spend a happy holiday
Though fleeting it may be
Among the Haliburton Hills
And there Gods smile you'll see

-May Gorrie, Sister to Daniel

Worry over fire hall closure

To the Editor,

I am writing to express deep concern over the potential closure of Fire Station #6 on Highway 28. For those of us around Paudash Lake, this is our nearest emergency response station - and every extra minute in a fire, medical emergency, or accident could cost lives and property. The majority of year round residents are seniors.

Beyond safety, the financial impact is staggering. If Station #6 closes, many homeowners could see significant rate increases (8 to 30 per cent) annually simply because of the greater distance from a fire hall. (For a lake of 640 homes this could equate to $500k net increase to the insurance companies.)

For families, retirees, and seasonal property owners, this burden is unreasonable and unfair.

Meanwhile, our community has rallied in support of Station #6 through active fundraisers for equipment and renovations.

Closing a station that residents clearly value and support makes no sense. Instead of spending money on consultants recommending closures, council should be investing in upgrades to keep these vital stations in service.

These closures are still only recommendations. Let's make sure council hears from us before they become decisions.

Station #6 is more than a building - it's a lifeline. Please, keep it open.

Yours faithfully,

Allison Scanlan,
Highlands East

This week we celebrate our local kids returning to school! If you have a back to school photo you would like shared in the newspaper, please send it to emily@haliburtonpress.com by Friday, Sept. 5 to be featured. Good luck to all returning school staff and students.

Minden Memories

The photo, taken in 1911 near what is now Kinmount House, shows the log-jammed Burnt River with the Austin Lumber Mill and nearby houses. The postcard notes identify the two men in the foreground as Charlie Wellstood and George Train. /Photo courtesy of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre

HALIBURTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Book of the Week

"A fascinating look at the men and women who devote their lives to this service." —Esquire.com
SMOKEJUMPER
A MEMOIR BY ONE OF AMERICA'S MOST SELECT AIRBORNE FIREFIGHTERS
JASON A. RAMOS
AND JULIAN SMITH

Wildfires in the American West are growing larger, deadlier, and more unpredictable, fueled by drought, decades of forestry mismanagement, and the steady expansion of homes into wilderness areas. Against this backdrop, a select few men and women take to the skies as smokejumpers: elite firefighters trained to parachute into the most dangerous blazes.

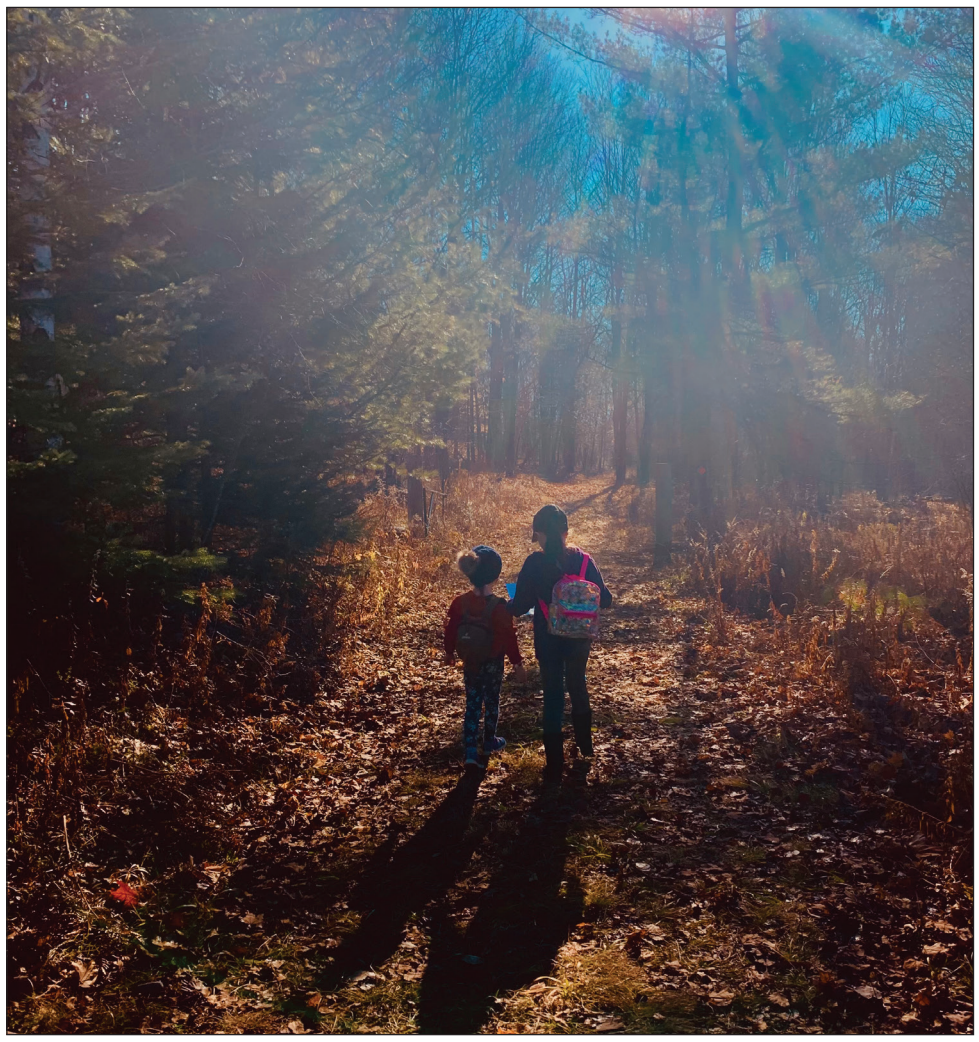
Jason Ramos, an active-duty smokejumper, takes readers inside this high-stakes world, where fires move like liquid, surge downhill with deadly speed, and test every ounce of skill and courage. Through his memoir, Ramos explores the history of smokejumping, the adrenaline and danger of life on the fire line, and why these guardians of the forest are more essential than ever.

Smokejumper by Jason A. Ramos is available to borrow from the Haliburton County Public Library. To place a hold or learn more, visit haliburtonlibrary.ca.

Please note that this edition of the newspaper was produced on Friday, Aug. 29 to accommodate closures on the holiday Monday. Events and stories that took place over the weekend can be found in next week's edition of the newspaper. Thank you for understanding.

Hike Haliburton; off on the right track

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor



Hike Haliburton is the perfect opportunity to check out the fall colours, and explore the wide variety of trails across Haliburton County. This year's festival is set for Sept. 18 to 21. /FILE

It's the largest hiking festival in Canada, and this year, it's celebrating 22 years of blazing trails.

Haliburton County's Hike Haliburton Festival has officially opened their booking platform for this year's event. "The Haliburton Highlands offers a truly stunning destination to explore and Hike Haliburton is a great opportunity to bring people to the region to experience many types of adventures," said Angelica Ingram, the Manager of Tourism for the County of Haliburton, "whether it be outdoor, culinary, cultural or even just a place to disconnect."

For over 20 years now, the festival has changed shapes and sizes, but has continued to put its best foot forward by offering guided hikes on public and private properties, spanning across all four municipalities. One of the advantages of the festival is the opportunity to explore parts of the county normally off-limits, under the direction and care of registered hike leaders. "There will be more than 50 people involved in this year's event, from leading hikes to planning logistics to offering support," said Ingram. "The Haliburton Highlands is fortunate to have a wealth of dedicated volunteers who put their heart and soul into this event, all with the main goal of showing off the beauty of the Haliburton Highlands to both year-round residents and visitors."

With over 40 free hikes and paid experiences, Ingram noted that this year, there will be options for everyone to participate, from fun family strolls to rugged trailblazing. This year, the festival received funding from the Federal Government, which allowed county staff to streamline the registration process, as well as add some "value-added items," to the event, noted Ingram.

On the My Haliburton Highlands website - the hosting page for the Hike Haliburton Festival - the hikes are currently listed with a series of factors tagged alongside the titles, such as whether the hike is dog-friendly, the part of the county that the hike will take place in, and the difficulty level of the trail, ranging from easy to advanced.

While planning an outdoor festival comes at the whim of Mother Nature, Ingram is confident that the event has held strong for over two decades, and this year will not be any different. "When planning on attending Hike Haliburton, we encourage participants to look ahead at the weather forecast and dress appropriately," she said. "Warm clothes, suitable footwear and waterproof layers can go a long way to help prepare for an outdoor adventure"

Each hike comes with a specific theme, such as "Folk on Foot" or "Walk, run, stretch for busy women 40+." While there are a variety of hikes laid out over the four-day festival, there are also a number of live entertainment opportunities, and events scattered across the county at the same time. "This year there are a lot of ways people can engage with the event without having to hike," said Ingram. "There are a number of community events that are happening the weekend of Hike Haliburton that have a direct or indirect tie to the event."

Some of these events include the annual Colourfest at Head Lake Park on Sept. 20, the Rails End Gallery and Arts Centre opening reception for *En Plein Air Haliburton* on the same day, as well as an opening at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre titled *Haycock: One Family's Canvas of Canada,* to name a few.

"One of the great things about the festival is it is held during the shoulder seasons of tourism, when we are looking to draw more people to the region," said Ingram. "The festival is a great opportunity for a day-trip or a weekend visit, which spills into accommodations, restaurants and other tourism businesses in the community. It also serves as a strong driver to bring people to the area for perhaps their first visit, which can in turn spark an interest in a return trip or the beginning of a new annual tradition of visiting."

This year's Hike Haliburton Festival will be held from Sept. 18 to Sept. 21 in various locations across the county. For the full lineup of events and experiences, visit myhaliburtonhighlands.com/hike-haliburton/.

"We have seen a shift in travel trends this summer and I am optimistic that shift will continue into the fall season, with more Canadians wanting to stay close to home and explore their own backyards," said Ingram. "We can't wait to show off the region and continue to grow the festival year over year."

Golfing for good

Abbey Gardens held their annual golf tournament last week at the Blairhampton Golf course. The event is a fundraiser in support of Abbey Gardens' educational and environmental programming. Pictured, left, the group three winners (Men's team): Mark Hamilton, Nick Kulas, Brad Park, Janis Parker (presenting gift bags), Jeff Wilson. The event raised $75,000. /submitted

MVPs

Even though it was the final week of the soccer season, the enthusiasm of the players had not diminished in the slightest as the teams took to the field with greater skill, endurance, and perseverance than had been seen in the earlier weeks of the summer. Coaches and parents alike were quick to notice the much improved gameplay on the field, along with the better attitudes, sportsmanship, and confidence that had developed both on and off the field. The most exciting moments of the summer were fondly remembered and joyfully celebrated as the season drew to a close, and proud athletes received their medals to mark another truly stellar and memorable year. Players and parents alike expressed heartfelt thanks to their volunteer coaches for the incredible amount of effort, patience, and dedication that went into making the program such a success, with many already beginning conversations about next summer's schedule and opportunities. Looking ahead to next year, we are planning to expand our enrollment even further with additional players and more teams as every summer the waiting list continues to grow. The community's demand for outdoor sports, healthy activity, and shared experiences in Haliburton only seems to increase each year, and our program is eager to rise to meet that demand in the seasons ahead. We sincerely hope that discussions with Dysart continue toward outdoor fields and better sporting facilities so that all these youth who want to participate in outdoor sports have the opportunity.

Submitted by Andrew Brown

Boys 7-9 - Purple team

Caleb McElwain - Boys 10-13 - Grassroots Strikers

Everly Cox - Girls 10-11 - Navy Team

Levi Kinghorn - Boys 7-9 - White team

Logan Tetler & Edison Brown

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MVPs

Girls 7-9 - Silver

Hadley Ryckman, Georgette Stewart, Charlotte Houghton, Elsie Webb
Girls 7-9 - Kiwi Team

Jack & Liam Ward - Boys 10-13 - Haliburton Crew United

Kinley Cox - Girls 11-13 - Green Team

Ivy Fletcher & Ruby Russell - Gilrs 7-9 - Purple

Maisey Appleton and Pearl Mansfield

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Council approves shade shelters for Head Lake Park

ADAM FRISK
Journalist

Parkgoers can expect to get some reprieve from the blistering sun in the near future after two sun shade shelters were approved by the municipality last week.

The Municipality of Dysart et al approved the acquisition of two shade shelters that will be erected near the playground at Head Lake Park. The shelters will also include seating for parkgoers seeking a break from the sunshine.

"Especially after the summer we've had, shade shelters are quite an important item," Andrea Mueller, manager of programs and events, said during the Aug. 26 regular council meeting. "We recently had a staff member who was at a playground and safety inspection course and shade shelters were talked about at length and about the importance of them even over some of the play features."

Mueller explained that part of the intent during the playground fundraising initiative was to put in shade shelters that are aside from trees, but physical structures.

Council gave the go ahead for acquiring a 14′ x 14′ and a 20′ x 20′ fabric-style shelter in which the canopy can be removed ahead of winter.

Funds raised by the Head Lake Park Fundraising Committee will be used to pay for the shelters at a yet-to-be determined cost. Mueller told council staff are still awaiting estimates from the manufacturer.

Education on the forefront in light of alleged cat chaos

from page 1

with and if it doesn't help the situation then we got to move to putting some rules in place to look after that," Casey said. "I hate more rules but if people aren't going to look after their animals on that note then we have to jump in."

The municipality launched the public education campaign the following day, posting on social media an infographic highlighting what it says are "several benefits of keeping cats indoors."

"Currently, we only have a Canine Control By-law in place, but before considering a new by-law for our feline friends, we want to focus on education and community dialogue," reads the social media post. "We've identified several benefits of keeping cats indoors, along with some creative ways to keep them entertained and engaged. We're eager to hear your thoughts and ideas on this matter!"

Some of the benefits the infographic lists include: increased lifespan, safety from traffic, protection from predators and prevented fights with other animals.

The social media post does not mention feral cats, but rather focuses on domestic felines.

When reached by *The Echo* to clarify whether it's more of a domestic cat issue rather than a feral problem, Councillor Casey said: "It's both."

"People let their cats out at night and they just wander off onto someone else's property who may or may not have a dog and the next thing you know the dog starts barking and waking everybody up," Casey explained in a telephone interview. "Not only that, they're using everybody else's gardens as litter boxes and stuff like that. So it's about taking responsibility for their own pets, is what we're after.

"It's both feral and domesticated cats doing the same thing. It's a two-part problem. It's starting to draw in the coyotes into town too," Casey said.

The councillor said a constituent captured images of a coyote on a trail camera recently.

Hailey Cole, supervisor of municipal law enforcement, admitted that should it come to it, "regulating cats is going to be a difficult task if we decide to take it on."

"But public education is absolutely in our scope right now," Cole told council.

Cole went on to say that should a by-law be required, she would have to inquire with other municipalities to see what a feline control by-law would look like.

"That's my suggestion, do the public education first and if it doesn't fly then we will have to do something about it," Casey said.

Several Ontario municipalities have by-laws in place for cat control. In Ottawa, for example, cat owners are not required to keep their cat leashed or indoors but rather owners must "control kitty's outdoor activities and take responsibility by not allowing their cat to cause damage to or disturbance on other residents' property."

In Peterborough, cat owners face stiffer by-laws. Owners are required to register each feline and pay an annual licensing fee. Owners of more than one cat must have their animals spayed or neutered. No more than three cats are permitted in one household and owners must not permit their cats to be off their own property.

According to the Animal Alliance of Canada (AAC), a non-profit organization that works to protect all animals and promote a harmonious relationship between humans, animals, and the environment, says that by-laws don't actually help with controlling feral cat populations.

"The only way to really help in a feral situation is to organize within the community and to set up spay/neuter programs for feral colonies," Liz White, founding director of AAC, said in a telephone interview. "Ultimately the colonies just disappear because they can't reproduce and often they are not long-lived because they'll be predated upon or the weather is really bad for them or whatever, but it's pretty tough to live outside."

White acknowledges that rounding up cats for a spay/neuter program isn't exactly the easiest thing to do but it's the best way to reduce the size of colonies.

"Once the animals are released back outside, what it means is there's a population of cats that some or hopefully many that can't reproduce that are eating the food supply and so it makes it harder for those that are still able to reproduce to continue doing so," White explained. "It begins to reduce the colonies way down."

However, White said that if people are going to have unspayed or neutered animals such as barn cats or domestic cats that roam outside, they're going to reproduce and then the community will end up with strays, whether there's a by-law in place or not.

The AAC founding director said that prohibiting domestic cats from roaming the great outdoors would be a "very positive" step in the right direction.

"There's no way you can protect cats from every situation that they might face outdoors, and I know people say 'Well that's just normal,' but the fact of the matter is they're domestic, they're not wild, and they often can't protect themselves," White said. "And they impact the bird population quite wildly. They're good at getting rodents which is helpful, which is why a lot of people have them in barns. But from the cat's point of view, it's much healthier to keep the cat indoors."

White said she would welcome a by-law mandating domestic cats to remain inside, but would, however, "be quite vigorously opposed" to a by-law prohibiting the feeding of feral cats.

"It's a compassionate thing to do," she said. "It's kind of cruel to leave these animals without any help."

As for the public education campaign, White said the fact that Dysart is taking this approach to start is a great first step.

"It sort of starts people thinking about it. A lot of people let their cats out and don't even think about it," she said.

White said the AAC is open to discussing with the municipality a humane way of handling the feral cat issue and to provide a voice for establishing a by-law should it arise.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING FOR
PROPOSED OFFICIAL PLAN
AMENDMENT & ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT
TO ZONING BY-LAW 2005-120 OF
THE MUNICIPALITY OF DYSART ET AL

DATE: **Tuesday, September 23, 2025**

TIME: **9:05 AM**

LOCATION: **Take notice that the public meeting for official plan amendment and zoning by-law amendment will take place in Council Chambers in the Municipal Office 135 Maple Avenue, Haliburton, Ontario and in electronic format using Zoom. The meeting will be live streamed to YouTube.**

Applications:

Lands of 2463756 Ontario Inc. – File No. D08-OP-2025-001 – Algonquin Gardens

Purpose and Effect: The purpose of this Official Plan Amendment is to change the land use designation on part of Lot 27, Concession 10 & 11, Harcourt Township, Municipality of Dysart et al., County of Haliburton from the Rural Areas designation to a Site-Specific Waterfront Areas designation to facilitate a 25 lot Plan of Subdivision (File No. D12-SB-2025-001 - 2463756 Ontario Inc.)

Location: 1089 Marquis Drive, Part of Lot 27, Concession 10 & 11, in the Geographic Township of Harcourt, now in the Municipality of Dysart et al.

Concurrent Applications: The proposed Official Plan Amendment is subject to concurrent applications for a Plan of Subdivision (File No. D12-SB-2025-001 – 2463756 Ontario Inc. and Plan of Condominium (File No. D07-CD-2025-001 - 2463756 Ontario Inc.).

Lands of Hay – File No. D14-ZB-2025-012

Purpose and Effect: The subject property is currently zoned Urban Residential Type 1 (R1) and Environmental Protection (EP). The purpose of the proposed amendment is to refine and more accurately delineate the precise limits of the Environmental Protection boundary.

Location: 1023 Stothart Creek Road, Part Lot 16 & 17, Concession 10, Lot 19, Plan 637, in the Geographic Township of Dudley, now in the Municipality of Dysart et al.

Lands of Abbey Gardens Community Trust - File No. D14-ZB-2025-013

Purpose and Effect: The subject property is currently zoned Rural Residential – 13 (RR-13) exception zone and Environmental Protection (EP) zone. The purpose of the proposed amendment is to refine and more accurately delineate the precise limits of the Environmental Protection boundary on the subject property.

Location: 1188 Irish Line Road, Part Lot 4, Concession 3, in the Geographic Township of Guilford, now in the Municipality of Dysart et al.

For more information about electronic meetings and public participation in an electronic meeting, contact the Municipal Clerk at mbishop@dysartetal.ca.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS MATTER INCLUDING INFORMATION ABOUT APPEAL RIGHTS: Contact the Planning and Land Information Department by appointment during regular office hours (8:30 A.M-4:30 P.M, Monday to Friday), or by contacting Kris Orsan, Manager of Planning at korsan@dysartetal.ca.

Dated at the Township of Dysart, this 2nd day of September 2025.

Kris Orsan, CPT,
Manager of Planning
Planning and Land Information
Municipality of Dysart et al
135 Maple Avenue, Haliburton, Ontario K0M 1S0
Phone: 705-457-1740 ext. 626
E-mail: korsan@dysartetal.ca

Backlit Re/Max sign gets a break

ADAM FRISK

Journalist

The backlit Re/Max sign adorned to a building on Highland Street will continue to shine after the municipality granted the building owner temporary reprieve from by-law enforcement.

During Dysart et al's Aug.26 regular council meeting, Christopher Alexander, owner of Re/Max Professionals North Brokerage, requested relief from a section of by-law that prohibits backlit signage in the area.

"First I want to apologize for the mixup," Alexander told council. "When we had the sign designed it was all in good faith and we had expected the sign company to follow all of the by-laws, get the appropriate permits but obviously that did not happen."

Alexander explained he wanted a sign for 191 Highland St. designed to match the general look of other signage on businesses in town.

"We thought we had accomplished that," Alexander said. "I guess we would really appreciate an exemption for it."

The original sign permit application included plans for a backlit sign. However, after the municipality pointed out to the contractor that backlit signage was not permitted, the design was then tweaked to remove the illumination aspect of the sign.

Hailey Cole, supervisor of municipal law enforcement, told council she received the updated plans that were attached to the approved sign permit and that it did not include backlighting. Cole noted that gooseneck lighting was the option presented to the contractor during a phone conversation.

"For the record, that wasn't relayed to us," Alexander told council. "He did tell us that we didn't get a permit for the backlit sign when the sign was already made."

Some businesses on the strip, to the likes of Shoppers Drug Mart and Algonquin Outfitters, have signage illuminated by what's known as gooseneck lighting. However, the CIBC and Rexall in town have backlit signage but the signs were erected prior to the by-law.

Alexander told council that there are plans in the works to reface the building at 191 Highland St. and to replace the signage for all the tenants of the building.

"It was quite expensive to do and because we have this project coming up, and we're going to do new signs in the future, to do it twice would be very cost prohibitive," Alexander said. "I'm just coming hat-in-hand here and hope you will give us an exemption for even an 18 to 24-month window until that project is completed."

Mayor Murray Fearrey briefly pushed back, asking Alexander "how do we know you're going to do what you say you're going to do."

"What happens if you don't redo the front of the building in a year," Fearrey asked.

Alexander noted that he and his business partner also own the Algonquin Outfitters building which recently went through a fairly extensive facelift, adding that Re/Max building is long overdue for a makeover.

"We believe that the building in question, with the sign in question, is really outdated, it needs to be improved," Alexander told the mayor. "We really believe in the longevity and value of Haliburton as a town and community and we're committed to continuing to invest there."

Council agreed to a 24-month by-law reprieve for Alexander.

Council passes by–law to reduce speed on Skyline Park Road

ADAM FRISK

Journalist

The municipality passed a by-law to reduce the speed limit on Skyline Park Road from 80 kilometres/hour to 50 kilometres/hour, a move prompted by a recent increase in traffic in the area.

The decision comes following a discussion during a regular council meeting in July about addressing the need for speed signs along the roadway.

"By default it is an 80-kilometre per hour road speed limit, so we're recommending three speed signs up there," Rob Camelon, director of public works said during the Aug. 26 regular council meeting.

Following the passing of By-Law 2025-70, the speed limit on Skyline Park Road will be reduced to 50 kilometres/hour in an effort to enhance safety for all road users. Camelon cited in his report to council that the ongoing improvements to the Ministry of Transportation owned Skyline Park is resulting in an increase of traffic on the roadway.

Improvements to the park at the end of the road is being spearheaded by the Rotary Club of Haliburton. Rotary officially broke ground at Skyline Park late last month, kicking off the club's initiative to revitalize the village's famed scenic lookout point and local landmark.

The new speed limit will be enforceable by police once the new signs are installed along the road. The project is expected to cost an estimated $500, which will be covered by the municipality's operating budget.

Mysteries in cottage country

In the fictional town of Port Ellis, there's no off-season for murder.

On Sunday, Sept. 14 at 1 p.m.m, the Arts Council Haliburton Highlands is hosting Books & Bites at the Dominion Hotel in Minden. Featuring Kate Hilton and Elizabeth Renzetti, co-authors of the Quill and Packet cozy mystery series, this Arts Council fundraising event is a book lovers delight.

In conversation with Emily Stonehouse, Kate and Elizabeth will share how this partnership of the pen started. After all, both authors are accomplished writers with best-selling books of their own, yet writing a mystery together set them off on an unexpected path. As Managing Editor for the *Haliburton Echo, Minden Times* and *County Life*, Emily will have lots of great questions for Kate and Elizabeth.

Questions from the audience will add to the conversation, along with opportunities to chat directly with Kate and Elizabeth during book signings. Why did they choose cottage country as a setting for these mysteries? How much of their own experiences as a seasoned journalist and a psychotherapist enhanced their plots and characters? What cottage community is Port Ellis based on? So many questions to be answered.

Tickets are $60 and include a selection of sweet treats, coffee or tea, a donation to the Arts Council and a choice of either of the two cozy mystery books *Bury the Lead* or *Widows and Orphans*. Online tickets are available through the Blue Heron Books website blueheronbooks.com/events.

Submitted

Have a thought, comment or opinion you'd like to share?

Send a letter to the editor to
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Family navigates rare cancer, one kilometre at a time

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

Carnarvon locals Megan and Curtis Barker are the parents to a spritely three-year-old and a wide-eyed nine-month old. Their lives are colourful and busy and just the right amount of noisy, but what should be a chapter of family fun took a turn for the worse one year ago.

In September 2024, Curtis was diagnosed with stage four cholangiocarcinoma, or bile duct cancer. This extremely rare form of cancer is seen in approximately 400 Canadians each year, and the nature of the disease makes the outcomes unpredictable. "We're still waiting to hear the next steps," said Curtis during a phone interview, while his baby wriggled on his lap. "To complicate things, we also found out he has a liver disease called PSC," added Megan. "Sadly no cure for PSC, and bile duct cancer is rare and aggressive."

Curtis shared that he woke up in the middle of the night, many months ago, to stabbing pains in his stomach. He went to the hospital, where he was told he had issues in his gallbladder. After weeks of focusing on gallbladder removal, which took place in April, 2024, ongoing build-up and complications led to a biopsy, which confirmed bile duct cancer. "I got the call while I was at work," Curtis recalled. "I called Megan, and I worked the rest of the day, and then that was the last day I worked."

Since that diagnosis, it's been months of treatment plans, medications, and facing the future with uncertainty. In December, Curtis underwent the life-altering whipple surgery, which removed parts of his stomach and pancreas to tackle the cancer.

Curtis and Megan Barker are working to do anything they can to raise awareness and funding for the rare cancer that Curtis is currently navigating. Pictured over Easter with their two young kids, the family is dedicated to looking forward with hope. /submitted

When chemotherapy and immunotherapy were planned to begin in February of this year, tests showed that the cancer had spread to his liver, abdomen and lymph nodes, bumping the diagnosis to stage four. Curtis has since started chemotherapy, which will be for the next six months, and immunotherapy for the next year and a half. "I've never taken pills in my life," laughed Curtis, "And now I need to take pills for life with every meal to be able to absorb nutrients of protein."

"My little motto is that we're surviving, not thriving," said Megan with a soft chuckle. "As a parent to very young kids, parenting has sort of been a nice distraction, but it's very emotional. I just want their dad to stick around." The couple started navigating the cancer journey when Megan was pregnant with their second child. "We planned a home birth to make sure Curtis could be present for it, and he delivered our baby!" she said. "Unfortunately I was unable to attend his treatments with him since I am breast-feeding, however we have an amazing support system and family and friends have stepped up."

While the future remains uncertain, one thing is clear: Megan and Curtis aren't the type of people who just sit and wait. In fact, they're quite the opposite. Upon receiving the life-changing news, they have connected with individuals battling the same rare disease, and have formed a community around the trials and tribulations of the uncertain cancer diagnosis.

In the spring, the young family took part in the Vile Bile walk/run, and raised over $10,000 for the cause. "Because so few have this cancer or know about it, it's very under-funded," said Megan. "We want to bring awareness around the topic for other people."

Over the course of September, Megan will be participating in the Cholangio-Cycle Challenge, a virtual bike-a-thon to raise funds for cholangiocarcinoma research. She hopes to pedal 600 kilometres over the next month; a goal she set for herself to do on her Peloton indoor bike. "I ride for my family," she said. Individuals can receive tax receipts for donating to the cause at www.cholangio.ca/cycle.

Megan noted that many individuals are paying for treatment of the rare cancer out of pocket, and she hopes that by fundraising for the research efforts, she can help other families who are navigating the same challenges as her own. To support Megan's cycling journey, visit fundraisemyway.cancer.ca/participants/megan-barker

"It's been a year," said Megan, reflecting on the highs and lows of the past, and looking towards the future. "We're trying not to spiral, for the sake of the kids, we're just trying to stay hopeful."

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Bridge Youth Centre back to school

Haliburton Youth Unlimited has been operating in Haliburton County for the past 18 years. Last fall they relaunched the Bridge Youth Centre on 2 Victoria. They saw over 60 youth ages 10 to 17 come through the doors of the centre within their first semester running.

Youth enjoyed a welcoming place to hang out with their friends, make new friendships, and have a space to be creative through art, baking and games.

Kyle and Leanne Young are the new co-directors of the youth organization and say that their desire is to help youth in Haliburton County reach their full potential through providing them a healthy and positive community to be a part of. Living in Haliburton County can be isolating and impact youth's mental health. They believe when young people have a positive place to belong and can connect with caring adult mentors they are more likely to thrive.

One way they are helping youth start the school year off strong is partnering with Haliburton Home Hardware and providing new backpacks for youth who need back to school supplies. The backpacks are full of back to school supplies like notebooks, pencils, markers, rulers and erasers. They have three sizes of backpacks and many different colours. Any student in need can come by the Bridge Youth Centre at 2 Victoria Street if needed.

If anyone is interested in helping support the community funded youth organization they are hosting a golf tournament on Sept. 18 at the Haliburton County Golf Club. You can contact the Youngs at haliburton@kawyu.ca to inquire about registering or making a donation. You can also visit their website www.yfc.ca/haliburton-highlands. All donations will go towards funding after school programs this coming school year. The Bridge is open for drop in for Grades 6 to 8 on Wednesday 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. and Grades 9 to12 on Thursdays 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.. Thursdays a late bus is also provided to help transport students home.

Submitted

Iron grip: Arm wrestlers unite in Haliburton

ADAM FRISK
Journalist

With a thunderous smack of a hand hitting a pad, two giants shake hands signalling the end of another round of a weekly meeting of the Haliburton arm wrestling club.

Throughout the summer, a group of about 10 individuals meet once a week at Head Lake, where they practice discipline, technique and camaraderie.

"We want to draw attention to this sport and to the club," Brad Barry said in an Aug. 21 interview. "We want people to come and join the club, we want people to train with us and hit tournaments."

The club meets at the public docks on Thursday evenings, setting up standing tables complete with elbow pads for each competitor, pin pads and hand pegs.

Barry, a competitive arm wrestler himself, said tournaments can draw up to 400 people, providing an intense and electric atmosphere.

Club member and 30-year arm wrestling veteran, Solomon Dicks, said he got into the sport after a rough encounter during his time in Alberta.

"This girl came up to me and said "You like to arm wrestle but you don't want to fight? Come with me,'" Dicks explained. "She got me into my first group of arm wrestlers.

"It's all ethics. Everything. There is no fighting. If you walk up to a table and disrespect somebody, you're gone. It will not be tolerated," Dicks explained.

The club began as a small group of guys getting together at Dicks' place to bang out a couple of rounds but as the club became larger, they began rotating venues and decided to take the sport to Head Lake in an effort to draw in more interest.

"Somehow or another, everybody likes to arm wrestle," he explained. "You go to a bar, have a couple of beers with somebody and at some point someone will say 'Let's arm wrestle.'

"But we do it a little bit different, we have rules. We made rules so nobody gets hurt," Dicks said.

The main rule for the club is that "everybody's got to go to work tomorrow," meaning no one gets injured while wrestling.

Haliburton arm wrestling club members pictured at Head Lake on Aug. 21.

"I've purposely lost matches because I would see somebody in a dangerous position," Dicks said. "It doesn't mean that much to me to beat you, but if I do, you're not going to go to work tomorrow, so I let it go, 100 per cent."

As for the club itself, with no official name just yet, the group is looking to grow (and to come up with a name) and is welcoming all levels of experience. So if you're interested in going "over the top," stop by the public docks in Haliburton Village at 6:30 p.m. on Thursdays to see if the club is of interest to you.

Haliburton arm wrestling club members practice.

Kick off the fall with Those Other Movies

Get ready for a great year of movies! Those Other Movies is proud to be part of The Film Circuit, a division of the Toronto International Film Festival Group. Founded in 1989, Film Circuit is TIFF's national film outreach programme, engaging domestic grassroots networks and strong community partnerships to bring the best of Canadian and world cinema to communities across the country. From Prince Rupert to Charlottetown, Film Circuit has over 170 locations in over 150 communities.

In Haliburton County, Those Other Movies will be starting the 2025/26 movie season with our first film, *A Nice Indian Boy,* on Sept. 11 with showings at 4:15 and 7:15 p.m. at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavillion.

A Nice Indian Boy is a romantic comedy based on a play by Madhuri Shekar of the same name. This feel-good film while comedic also explores the complex intersections of cultural traditions with an interracial gay couple, love and family. Stars Karan Soni and Jonathan Groff shine with sweet, heart-felt performances.

With the celebration of Pride in the Highlands in August and Diwali in Haliburton on November 15, this movie is a great fit for our September movie.

We're hoping to bring *Blue Sky Jo* for our second movie of the season on Oct. 9 (to be confirmed). Set in 1980s Quebec, this is a heartwarming story of a plucky and independent 10 year old girl with an active imagination. Her name is Hélène, but she calls herself Jo because she wants to be like Joséphine the Little Musketeer, her favourite cartoon heroine. She gets to know her gruff neighbour who looks out for her and her family.

While streaming services spoil us for choice, nothing compares to watching movies on a big screen, in community, and having a chance to reflect and discuss what we see together. Join us on the second Thursday of each month to watch movies together.

Thanks to our generous sponsors, we are still able to charge just $10 per film or $70 for a season's pass which gives you a discount on our fall film festival and spring documentary film festival.

Passes can also be reserved on our website. Please bring payment - CASH or CHEQUE with you to the movies.

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Haliburton International Film Festival (HIFF): November 7,8,9, 2025

Doc(k) Day: Saturday, April 11, 2026

For more information, contact:
thoseothermovieshaliburton@gmail.com

Submitted

Haliburton Highlands CHAMBER of COMMERCE

A MESSAGE FROM Haliburton Highlands CHAMBER of COMMERCE

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A tale of the forgotten: remembering the Mac-Pap Battalion

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

This spring, I attended Minden Hills' clean up of the Minden Hills cemetery on Bobcaygeon Road. While walking around with township staff, I was struck by a grave that had a red, yellow, and blue flag on it. Unrecognizable as any country's flag, further inspection revealed a laminated placard explaining that the grave of Nikodem Falkowski was a veteran of the Spanish Civil War.

If you are like me, you had not heard of the Spanish Civil War before.

Born Aug. 18, 1909 in the modern day Brest Region of Belarus (formerly Poland), Falkowski immigrated to Canada in 1929 on the S.S. Montclare and lived in Toronto.

Transplantation to Canada from Poland brought both language and cultural barriers for immigrants like Falkowski.

Experiencing the economic slump of the 1920s brought great disdain for many, leading many immigrants (of which was particularly fervorous in Polish, Finnish, and Ukrainian communities) to join the efforts of the Communist Party of Canada to seek justice against Canada's capitalist system in matters of social injustices and prevalent unemployment.

It was likely through his activism with the Communist Party or pro-communist Polish language publications in Toronto where Falkowski learned of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion (Mac-Pap Battalion), a part of the XV International Brigade that was fighting in the Spanish Civil War.

Interestingly, while volunteers from the United States primarily consisted of highly educated individuals, the majority of Canadian volunteers that formed the Mac-Pap Battalion almost entirely consisted of working class citizens, like Falkowski.

For some context, Polish immigrants faced discrimination in Canada. It was not uncommon to deny selling property to a Pole (or to any person of colour, or of Armenian, Hungarians, Italian, or Greek nationality, for that matter).

In Spain, General Francisco Franco sought to overthrow the democratically elected Republican government. When the war was declared, western countries such as Canada, Great Britain, and the United States of America refused to get involved with the conflict. By 1936, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini were actively supporting Franco's Nationalists.

Unperturbed, W.L. Mackenzie King wrote extensively on his fondness for Hitler as late as June of 1927. In one instance, King wrote in his diary "he is really one who truly loves his fellowmen, and his county, and would make any sacrifice for their good."

King commended Hitler on his love of animals, vegetarian diet, and likened him to a Joan of Arc figure. The Canadian Parliament applied the Foreign Enlistment Act that same year, making it illegal for volunteers to go and fight in the Spanish Civil War.

This did not stop the Mac-Paps. Volunteering was as simple as going to their headquarters at Queen and Spandina in Toronto. However, only those dedicated to eradicating fascism were allowed to join their ranks. The age range of the Mac-Paps was also the highest of the international volunteers, with the average age being in the late 30s.

Nikodem Falkowski (who went by Mike) appeared in a 1937 flyer showing Hungarians that fought in the Spanish Civil War (even though he was Polish). /Submitted

Members of the International Brigade were sent to fight a losing battle. Conditions of the Spanish Civil War were harsh and with a lack of manpower and inferior resources, the Republican army did not seem to have a chance at victory.

On May 30, 1937, Falkowski survived the sinking of the MV Ciudad de Barcelona en route from Marseille to Spain, carrying many Canadian volunteers destined for the International Brigade. Likely bribing his way through Europe, Nikodem's No. 2 company fought in the Battle of Ebro. In this battle, his company was unfortunate enough to be the first to experience the power of German 88mm artillery guns in war. Forced to retreat, the Mac-Paps were sent to the Sierra de Pandols, an area that was already war-torn and littered with bodies of both Republicans and fascist Nationalists. Holding out on Hill 609, their company received heavy artillery fire, reducing their numbers by half and killing two of their commanders.

Nikodem Falkowski's grave in Minden. His grave has a placard detailing his service during the Spanish Civil War. Unrecognized by the Government of Canada, the Friends and Veterans of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion is an organization whose effort is to recognize the Mac-Paps efforts towards ending fascism in Spain. Across Canada, they have planted flags and set up placards detailing information about the Veteran's service. /THOMAS SMITH staff

Spanish officials announced the International Brigades' retreat on September 23, 1938.

Over 46 per cent of Canadians that volunteered to fight fascism in Spain perished in their efforts.

Falkowski himself returned to Canada on February 3, 1939 (Please note that I have not been able to find more information on what he did in the time between the retreat of the International Brigade and his return to Canada.)

Derek Blackadder, a member of the Friends and Veterans of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, visited Falkowski's grave on Remembrance Day in 2024.

The organization is dedicated to keeping the memory of the 1,600 soldiers that volunteered to leave Canada behind to fight fascism in Spain.

An avid historian, Blackadder first connected with the group through social media.

"It is remembrance," said Blackadder.

Despite their foresight, and commitment and willingness to fight against fascism, the Mac-Paps were treated remarkably badly when they returned, says Blackadder.

After returning to Canada, veterans of the Spanish Civil War were closely monitored by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, were denied to fight in World War II, and continued to face discrimination. The RCMP kept note of the veterans and were quick to use it against them in legal matters, some being sent to prison.

In 1985, U.S. President Ronald Reagan commented on the International Brigade, saying that most Americans feel that those who fought with the Loyalists, fought on the "wrong side of the war".

Later in life, Falkwoski worked as a banquet porter at the Royal York in Toronto. He died in March of 1992, being buried in Minden Hills Cemetery alongside his brother Paulin.

Only one veteran of the Mac-Pap Battalion would ever see recognition in Canada for his efforts.

In 2001, Jules Paivio, the sole surviving member of the Mac-Pap Battalion was in attendance at the unveiling of the Mackenzie-Papineau monument at Rideau Falls Park. The monument was a collaborative effort between the National Capital Commission and the Embassy of Spain. At the event, Paivio was granted Spanish citizenship for his service.

The Canadian government has yet to officially recognize the efforts the Mac-Paps made to bring an end to fascism in Spain.

The inaction of the Canadian government is a historical scar many have forgotten.

I promise Falkowski and his family one thing; that I will remember.

"There are dangers in our world people need to pay attention to," said Blackadder. "If we don't slow these dangers before they grow too much, we are likely to end up repeating the events of the 1930s."

SUDOKU SOLUTION

6	5	3	7	2	8	9	1	4
8	7	4	9	1	5	3	2	6
1	2	9	4	6	3	8	7	5
2	6	5	1	8	9	7	4	3
4	1	8	3	7	6	2	5	9
9	3	7	2	5	4	1	6	8
5	4	1	8	3	2	6	9	7
3	9	2	6	4	7	5	8	1
7	8	6	5	9	1	4	3	2

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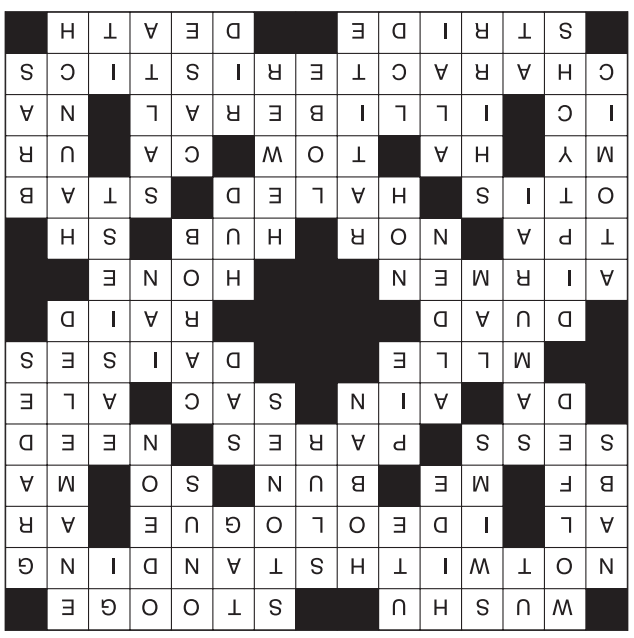

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	9				7		8	
		6		9				2

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Fun By The Numbers

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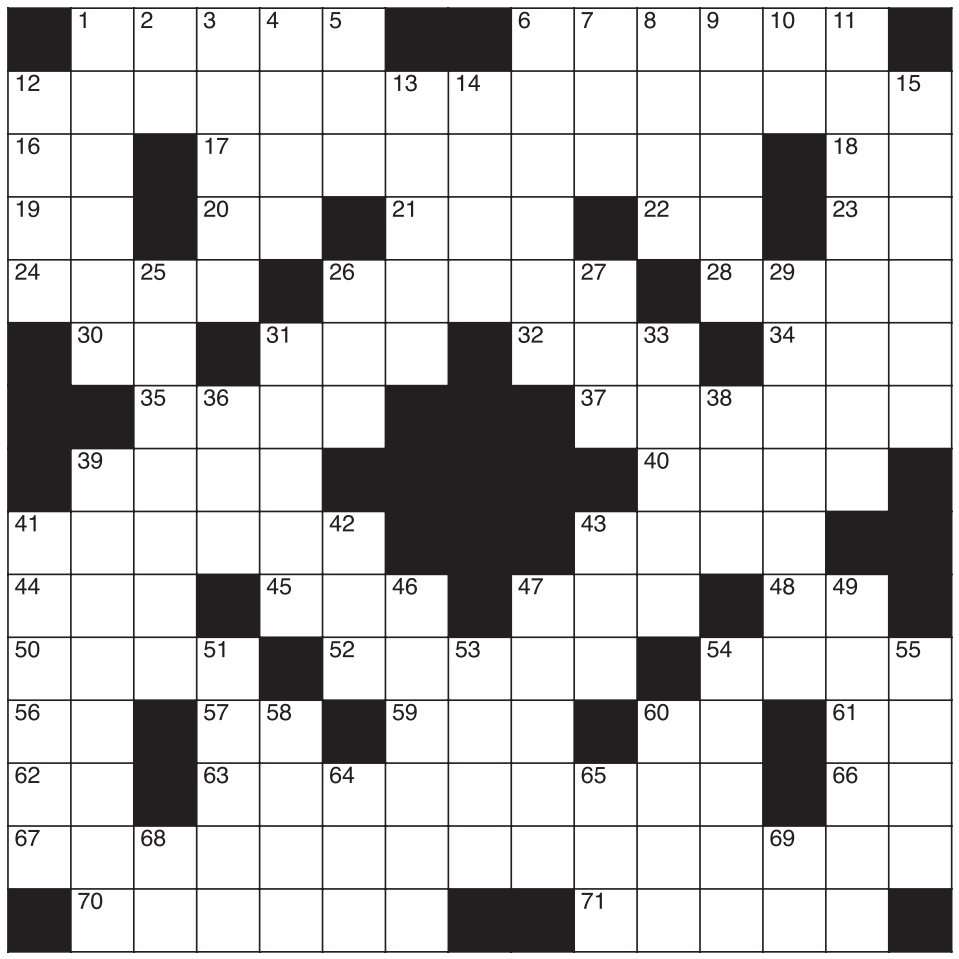
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers on page 17



CLUES ACROSS
1. Martial arts in China
6. The butt of jokes
12. Nevertheless
16. Sportscaster Michaels
17. A firm believer
18. Atomic #18
19. One's bestie
20. Of I
21. Hamburger accessory
22. Thus
23. Partner to Pa
24. Scottish tax
26. Cuts away
28. Require
30. Government lawyer
31. Own (Scottish)
32. Body cavity
34. Brew
35. Young woman (French)
37. Platforms
39. Pair of points in mathematics
40. Attack suddenly
41. Aviators
43. Make perfect
44. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
45. Neither
47. The center of a city
48. Sacrifice hit in baseball
50. Singer Redding
52. Dragged forcibly
54. Puncture with a knife
56. Belonging to me
57. Expresses surprise
59. Haul
60. The Golden State
61. Biblical Sumerian city
62. Integrated circuit
63. Opposed to certain principles
66. Sodium
67. Qualities
70. Walk
71. It awaits us all

CLUES DOWN
1. Ate quickly
2. Peyton Manning's alma mater
3. Moves through water
4. Run away from
5. Utah resident
6. Natural objects
7. Children's game
8. Obligation to prove
9. Ancient Greek building for performances
10. Soldier
11. Decorated
12. Catches
13. Russell __, author
14. Speak indistinctly
15. Students get them
25. Japanese warrior
26. Dessert
27. Doleful
29. Most cushy
31. Moon crater
33. Small evergreen Arabian tree
36. Something fugitives are "on"
38. 007's creator
39. Paintings on hinged panels
41. Type of bomb
42. Japanese classical theater
43. U.S. gov't department
46. Flightless bird
47. One who cuts wood or stone
49. Buttock and thigh together
51. A way to gather
53. Body part
54. Argentinian city
55. Undergarments
58. Jai __, sport
60. Container for shipping
64. Type of screen
65. Get free of
68. Indicates position
69. Business department

Answers on page 17

Howling for hockey

This season's Haliburton County Huskies took to the ice last weekend with a special exhibition game against the Lindsay Muskies, with the local team coming out on top with a score of 3-2. The Huskies will be hitting the ice for the regular season in early September. /TIM YANO staff photographer

The Telling Our Stories Speakers Series set to begin

After nourishment, shelter, and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world.

- Philip Pullman, Author

The Telling Our Stories Speaker Series is presented by the Haliburton County Community Cooperative. The Speakers Series has enjoyed more than 10 years of stories told by some extraordinary speakers on a wide range of topics involving adventure, travel, the environment, art, social issues, politics and personal journeys. The series happens every second Wednesday of every month from September to June at the Haliburton Highlands Outdoors Association Fish Hatchery, 6712 Gelert Rd, Haliburton.

This season, the Speakers Series organizers have engaged an outstanding roster of presenters including Martha Perkins, former *Haliburton Echo* Editor, Scott Russell, retired CBC sports broadcaster and author, Dougie Walker, Highlands Summer Festival Artistic Producer and Dr. Nell Thomas, family physician, journalist and public speaker.

The first presentation is Wednesday, Sept. 10 and features author David McPherson discussing his recent books on two Toronto music shrines: *The histories of Massey Hall and the Horseshoe Tavern*. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the presentations are from 7 to 9 p.m.

Admission is $15/person payable at the door or on line at: www.tellingourstories.company.site. As seating is limited, pre-registration is highly recommended. To more information, contact Barrie Martin by at 705-457-7557 or by email at barrieinthehighlands@gmail.com

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September 2019

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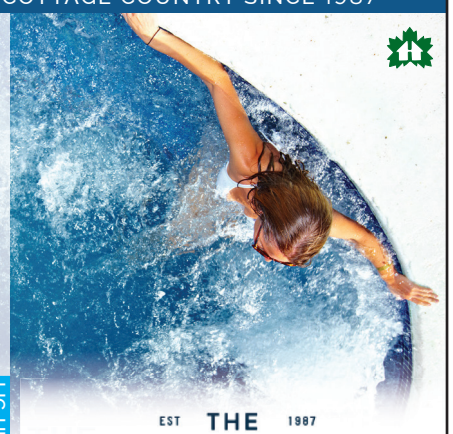

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The Times

Monday, September 10, 2001 Number 2009

Doug Johnson Broker Countrywide

GOING WITH THE FLOW: The Minden Wild Water Preserve was alive with activity this past weekend as paddlers converged on Minden for the annual Open Canoe Championships. This participant was caught on film Friday afternoon practicing his technique through the slalom course. Competitors spent Friday and Saturday getting a feel for the course, with the racing held all day Sunday. For more information and another photo, see page 9.

9-1-1 process moving ahead

by Jerry Grozelle

Preliminary mapping for 9-1-1 in Haliburton County has been completed. That was part of Stephen Foster's report at the August meeting of Haliburton County Council. Foster noted that there are some changes to be made and the final road naming has yet to be completed.

Foster suggested that each township form a road naming committee, which would review the names and report back to council.

The county has 101 property owners' associations and Foster's assistants had contacted 90 of those associations as of late August. "Things aren't going as smoothly as we had hoped regarding contact with the lake associations," he said. "But we have come a long way."

Foster expressed the concern about roads that are named after a resident. He said there could be conflicts which could result in delays in the process.

"There will be conflicts," he said. "That's part of the reason for forming road naming committees."

Foster admits that the process is not

(more on page 15)

ENTHUSIASTIC PERFORMANCE: The final Music by the Gull conert was held August 31 on South Water Street in Minden. The Gentlemen of Song, under the direction of Marg Jeske, were featured, along with Womyn Out Loud, an all female choral group from Haliburton. As the photos above demonstrate, Marg, with accompanist Elsie Lewis, is an enthusiastic conductor who works hard to encourage the all male chorus. At several points in the performance, the director invited the audience to sing along with the group. Music by the Gull was organized by Lori Reddering and Glenn Carter, with the help of volunteers and financial support from the Minden Lions Club

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